

Consular News

Brought to you by the
Consular Section at the U.S.
Embassy, Port Louis,
Mauritius

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Welcome!

Greetings from the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy in Port Louis and welcome to what we expect will become a quarterly consular newsletter. In an effort to better serve you, the resident American citizen communities in Mauritius, Seychelles, and Reunion, we are launching this inaugural issue with information we hope is of use to you. We appreciate your comments and feedback. Please feel free to contact us via e-mail (PTLconsular@state.gov) or by phone (230) 202-4400 with comments or feedback.

We look forward to being in touch. As always, it is a pleasure to serve you. Your consular team,

Wendy Ryde and Angela Henry

Consular Section Closure 9/18-21, 2006

The Consular Section will be closed to the public from Monday, September 18 – Thursday, September 21 for in-service training. In the event of an emergency, we can be reached via the Embassy switchboard at (230) 202-4400.

Consular Section Contacts:

PTLconsular@state.gov

(230) 202-4400

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 requires that by January 1, 2008, travelers to and from the Caribbean, Bermuda, Panama, Mexico and Canada have a passport or other secure, accepted document to enter or re-enter the United States.

In the proposed implementation plan, which is subject to a period of initial public comment, the Initiative will

be rolled out in phases, providing as much advance notice as possible to the affected public to enable them to meet the terms of the new guidelines.

The proposed timeline will be as follows:

January 8, 2007 - Requirement applied to all air and sea travel to or from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.

January 1, 2008 - Requirement extended to all land border crossings as well as air and sea travel.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposal may access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov and follow the instructions for submitting comments.

This is a change from prior travel requirements and will affect all United States citizens entering the United States from countries within the Western Hemisphere who do not currently possess valid passports. This new requirement will also affect certain foreign nationals who currently are not required to present a passport to travel to the United States. Most Canadian citizens, citizens of the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda, and to a lesser degree, Mexican citizens will be affected by the implementation of this requirement.

Overseas Absentee Voting

American citizens living abroad are reminded that 2006 is an election year in the United States. Every seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and one-third of the seats in the U.S. Senate are being contested this year. Overseas citizens are eligible to participate in primary, run-off, and special elections that occur throughout the year, as well as the general elections in November.

**Federal Voting
Assistance Program**

<http://www.fvap.gov/>

We strongly encourage you to register to vote and/or request absentee ballots as early in the year as possible to ensure that you will receive all ballots for which you are eligible. Should questions or problems occur, you would still be able to address them in time to vote in the 2006 general elections.

Please contact the consular section or visit the Department of State's travel website for more information:

http://www.travel.state.gov/law/info/info_2964.html.